



Fall 2023

Dear Families,

Raising children in the faith doesn't happen just at church, but at home and in everyday life. As parents, you have the unique role to walk alongside your children every day and teach them about Jesus. In order to help promote and encourage faith development at home, I have included several resources for you to use in your homes:

- Family Devotions
  - Crossroads Kids Club
  - CJ and Friends
- Talking to Your Children
  - Worship
- Family Traditions
  - Fall Holidays
- 16 Table Talk questions to use at the dinner table
- Faith Conversation Guide
- Creating Rhythm Words

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

Blessings,

Jen Roettjer, DCE

Director of Youth and Discipleship





## [ FAMILY DEVOTIONS ]

### LEARN

Crossroads Kids Club

Visit the Crossroads Kids Club YouTube Channel to find videos about Bible stories and songs, mixed in with some silliness.

### SHARE

Highs and Lows from the day  
What are you thankful for today?

### PRAY

Confess  
Honor  
Ask  
Thanks

### MUSIC

CJ and Friends

Search for Artist on Spotify or Amazon Music.  
Visit the CJ and Friends YouTube Channel for music videos.



## [ FAMILY DEVOTIONS ]

### LEARN

Crossroads Kids Club

Visit the Crossroads Kids Club YouTube Channel to find videos about Bible stories and songs, mixed in with some silliness.

### SHARE

Highs and Lows from the day  
What are you thankful for today?

### PRAY

Confess  
Honor  
Ask  
Thanks

### MUSIC

CJ and Friends

Search for Artist on Spotify or Amazon Music.  
Visit the CJ and Friends YouTube Channel for music videos.



## [ TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ]

### WORSHIP

#### Thoughts to Consider

Attending worship services is at the heart of the Christian faith. Through worship, we come before our God to hear his Word and apply it to our lives. We also grow together with the support and nurture of those in our church family we see regularly.

Here are several tips to guide your child through the worship service.

- Prepare on Saturday night for Sunday morning by getting clothes and offering ready.
- Sit in a location where your child can see what is going on.
- Get to know those who sit around you and others in your church family.
- During prayer times, encourage your child to close their eyes and fold their hands.
- Provide your child with a small offering for them to put in the offering plate. Or encourage them to give a set portion of their allowance or other money they earn.
- Point out different parts of the church, such as crosses, colors, pulpit, and music.
- For the younger children, bring your child up for the children's message.
- Bring your child with you to celebrate the Lord's Supper.
- On the car ride home or at lunch, ask them what their favorite song was or what they learned at church. You might be surprised at how much they were paying attention!
- The more frequently you attend church, the easier it will be for your child to build good worship habits and sit through a service.



# [ FAMILY TRADITIONS ]

## FALL HOLIDAYS

### Thoughts to Consider

With the cooler weather and pumpkin spice filling the air, Fall is a great time to spend with your family. Let's look at several holidays and see what types of traditions we can celebrate together.

### Fall

- Pick a minor holiday and turn it into a full celebration
- Take a fall picnic
- S'mores bar – set out multiple types of chocolates and marshmallows to create your own s'mores creation. If it's too cold outside, consider putting all of your ingredients in a waffle cone and baking them.

### Halloween

- Pumpkin gathering and carving
- Boo your neighbors – make some treats and leave them on their porch as a surprise
- Look for creative ways to use up your Halloween candy – how about building a candy structure or making a special dessert
- Pick a family theme for your costumes

### Thanksgiving

- Thankful box – fill early in the day with anonymous things you are thankful for, then pass the box around during dinner to read them
- Thanksgiving Tree – Hang blank pieces of paper from an empty tree for each person to write what they are thankful for
- Touch Football Game
- Don't forget about breakfast – make your own special Thanksgiving themed breakfast foods
- Run/Walk a 5K before your holiday meal



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]

WHAT IS THE LATEST PROJECT  
YOU ARE WORKING ON?

SET 9

WOULD YOU GO TO SCHOOL IF IT  
WERE A CHOICE?

SET 9

WHAT DO YOU DAYDREAM  
ABOUT?

SET 9

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST  
MEMORY? IF YOU WERE TO WRITE  
A BOOK OF YOUR LIFE, WOULD  
YOU START WITH THIS ONE OR A  
DIFFERENT MEMORY?

SET 9

WHEN ARE OLD THINGS BETTER  
THAN NEW THINGS?

SET 9

WHAT QUALITIES ABOUT YOUR  
MOM OR DAD DO YOU HOPE TO  
HAVE WHEN YOU ARE OLDER?

SET 9

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO  
SOMEONE WHO WANTED TO  
GIVE UP ON A TASK YOU KNEW  
THEY COULD FINISH?

SET 9

WHAT BEDTIME WOULD YOU PICK  
IF YOU COULD CHOOSE?

SET 9



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]



[ TABLE TALK ]

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE  
WORLD WILL BE LIKE WHEN YOU  
HAVE CHILDREN?

SET 9

WHAT WOULD MOTIVATE YOU TO  
TRY A NEW FOOD OR ACTIVITY?

SET 9

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ENJOY  
BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR?

SET 9

WHAT DO YOU WORRY ABOUT  
THE MOST?

SET 9

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FORM  
OF EXERCISE?

SET 9

WHAT ARE THREE THINGS YOU  
HAVE TO DO EVERY DAY,  
WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT?

SET 9

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU PICK  
FOR A DOG?

SET 9

WOULD YOU RATHER BE RICH OR  
FAMOUS?

SET 9



## It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

- **Find a bin or bucket and label it the "Joy Jar."** Place it in the middle of your dinner table along with a pen and index cards. Choose a period of time—30 days at the least—and write down all the answered prayers your family experiences and place them in the Joy Jar after dinner. (There will be some meals when you have nothing to write down—and that's okay.) At the end of the period of time, have your elementary schooler read through all the ways God was faithful to your family.
- **Make church part of your family's weekly routine.** There's always a reason not to go, but demonstrating a positive interest in connecting with community and learning about God is an integral step in helping your child establish a faith of their own. Find somewhere you can attend consistently, so your elementary schooler can build relationships and trust with their church friends and leaders. Talk about why church is important in your family.
- **With your 4th or 5th grader,** share your own story of how you began a relationship with God. Then share about how God has wired you, and how you connect with Him best. Share that it might be different than someone else's story. For example, you might feel most connected to God when you listen to worship music or journal; for others it may be when they are outside experiencing nature or beauty. Help your child see that we all connect with God in different ways, but there's a common thread of experiencing His love and forgiveness. Is there a particular way your child connects with God? Nurture it. If it's in nature, go for a hike. If it's journaling, take him or her shopping for a new journal. Music? Sign them up for a streaming music service so they can get all the latest worship songs.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your preschooler develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



Elementary

# FAITH

## PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

**Faith.** In the elementary school years, kids become equipped with the skills they need to discover more about faith, and they have an active imagination that leads them to ask questions about their world and what they experience. As they learn new stories from the Bible, you'll be amazed at the questions they start to consider. The best thing to remember is to treat each question with care. How you respond to your kids each time they have questions about faith will determine if they continue to talk to you about their faith. Your role is to...

---

**Provoke**  
**DISCOVERY**



**So they will . . .**  
**TRUST GOD'S CHARACTER AND**  
**EXPERIENCE GOD'S FAMILY.**

---

This guide is designed to help you connect with your elementary-age kid where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of faith. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal for your kid:

### **AUTHENTIC FAITH**

**Trusting Jesus in a way that transforms how I love God, myself, and the rest of the world.**

## TO ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS (K-3), SAY THINGS LIKE:

"Can I pray about that with you?"

"You can trust God no matter what."

**"You need to make the wise choice."**

"You should treat others the way you want to be treated."

"I'm not sure where that passage is. Let's look it up together." *(Teach them to use a concordance and digital reference book.)*

**"Don't ever get tired of doing the right thing." 2 Thessalonians 3:13** *(Repeat and memorize simple Bible verses together.)*

"When I first trusted Jesus . . ." *(Share your own faith story.)*

"I'm sorry your friend's mom is sick. What could we do to help?" *(Make service personal. Encourage them to serve people who matter to them.)*

## TO ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS (4-5), SAY THINGS LIKE:

"How can I pray for you today/this week?"

"Having faith isn't always easy, but we can trust God no matter what."

"What do you think is the wisest choice in this situation?"

"If you were them, how do you think you would want to be treated?"

"Have you read anything in the Bible that means a lot to you right now?" *(Talk about the Bible.)*

**"As for God, His way is perfect: The Lord's Word is flawless, He shields all who take refuge in Him." Psalm 18:30** *(Repeat simple Bible verses.)*

"Did you know that the Bible was written as 66 different books, but they all tell one story?" *(Connect the dots between the stories to give a bigger context.)*

"I've been wanting to volunteer more. Is there somewhere we could serve together." *(Consider serving at your church or a local ministry that appeals to your kid's interests.)*

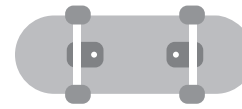
## JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The elementary years are the discovery years. You can provoke their discovery by encouraging their imaginations, allowing them to investigate without filling in all the blanks, and simply making yourself available for the many, many questions that will come. As your child learns to read and gain more independence, it's a great time to encourage personal devotional time. But don't let their faith become private; continue having other faith conversations as you go about your days together.

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

- **Few things grow a person's maturity or faith** better than serving others. If your middle schooler has a cause or passion that they've expressed interest in, research ways your entire family can get involved. Or, empower your middle schooler to figure out how they can get connected to a cause themselves. You may have to provide consistent encouragement, but let them take the first step to engaging with a charity, ministry, or organization.
- **Get your middle schooler connected** in a student ministry or youth group they can attend regularly. But don't just drop them off and pick them up, engage in what they're learning as much as you can. Connect with their small group leader right away and often, but only as a means to offer support and help. What your student discusses with their small group leader should remain private unless the leader initiates a conversation with you. Read the ministry's emails, newsletters, or website. Volunteer on the Host Team or Food Team so you're familiar with the environment and its leaders, but still give your student space to create their own spiritual community.
- **Help your middle schooler discover** the way they're uniquely wired to connect with God. For example, is it when they see something beautiful, when they listen to worship music, read their Bible, or when they are serving others? Encourage them to pursue worship and connect with Him in a way that feels meaningful and comfortable for them—even if it's a different style than your own.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your preschooler develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



Middle School

# FAITH

## PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

**Faith.** Middle School is a new and exciting time for kids, accompanied by lots of change. And with all that change comes the opportunity for a lot of growth in key areas, including faith. As kids make their way through the middle school years, they are transitioning from a time where their faith has primarily been a by-product of their parent's faith and mostly reactive, rather than proactive. But these are the years when they take initiative and create a faith of their own. The best thing you can do is be a coach, not a teacher. Encourage and affirm them in their personal faith journey. In this phase your role is to . . .

**Provoke  
DISCOVERY**



**So they will . . .  
OWN THEIR OWN FAITH AND  
VALUE A FAITH COMMUNITY.**

This guide is designed to help you connect with your middle school student in the phase they are in, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of faith. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind:

### **AUTHENTIC FAITH**

**Trusting Jesus in a way that transforms how I love God, myself, and the rest of the world.**

## TO SIXTH GRADERS, SAY THINGS LIKE:

"God will never stop loving you."

**"I am fearfully and wonderfully made."**  
**Psalm 139:14** *(Repeat simple Bible verses.)*

"Have you read anything in the Bible that means a lot to you right now?"

"Can we pray about this together?"

## TO SEVENTH GRADERS, SAY THINGS LIKE:

"When you do you feel closest to God?"

"I have questions, too. What other things do you wonder about?"

**"I don't know why . . . but I do know  
God is good. But that doesn't mean  
we'll understand everything."**

"How can I pray for you today/this week?"

"What would be a fun way we could serve others together?"

## TO EIGHTH GRADERS, SAY THINGS LIKE:

"God made you, He knows you, and He loves you."

"That's a great question. I don't know the answer, but we can find out."

"The way you live can show others who Jesus is."

**"When do you feel closest to God?"**

"What's something new that you're learning about God?"

## JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. In this phase, your middle schooler may be asking some hard questions. Don't be shocked (at least not visibly). Doubt isn't toxic to your middle schooler's faith; it's part of the process of personalizing what they believe. Make your home a safe place for them to ask questions, and show interest in what they are learning.

# CREATING A RHYTHM WITH YOUR WORDS...

## in ELEMENTARY



*Be a coach. Instill purpose by starting the day with encouraging words.*

- Good morning!
- I hope you know . . .
- Be kind.
- You are beautiful/handsome!
- I love you.



*Be a friend. Interpret life during informal conversations as you travel.*

- I enjoy spending time with you.
- How exciting that you . . .
- Tell me what you learned today . . .
- I noticed you like to play with (name of friend). What do you like best about them? Can I tell you about my best friend growing up?
- If you had \$20, what would you spend it on and why?



*Be a teacher. Establish values with intentional conversations while you eat together.*

- What was the best part of your day? Worst?
- What do you think the wisest choice is?
- Don't ever get tired of doing the right thing.
- If you were that person, how would you want to be treated?
- What are three things you are thankful for?



*Be a counselor. Strengthen your relationship through heart conversations at the end of the day.*

- Can I pray about that with you?
- How did that make you feel?
- Tell me more.
- You can trust God no matter what.
- I love you no matter if you're good or if you're bad.

# CREATING A RHYTHM WITH YOUR WORDS...

## in MIDDLE SCHOOL



*Instill purpose by starting the day with encouraging words.*

- Good morning!
- You look so handsome/beautiful today!
- I'm praying that you have an amazing day!
- How can I pray for you today?
- I believe in you!
- Can I give you a hug?



*Interpret life during informal conversations as you travel.*

- Who are your top three friends right now?
- What's your favorite thing in your life right now?
- What was something that was your favorite that you don't like anymore?
- What's a movie or song that all your friends are talking about?
- What would you do on your "perfect" day?
- What would be your dream job?
- Do you ever wonder what it was like to be me when I was a kid? What would you like to know?



*Establish values with intentional conversations while you eat together.*

- You're enough.
- The choices you make today will impact your opportunities tomorrow.
- I really appreciate how you \_\_\_\_\_.
- What would you do in this situation?
- Be yourself. I like who you are.



*Listen to their heart by staying available—just in case.*

- You know you can tell me anything.
- If you can't talk to me, who would you feel comfortable talking to?
- I will always love you no matter what.
- Did anything happen today that was upsetting/frustrating?
- What was the best part of your day?
- Tell me more.
- I'm sorry that I \_\_\_\_\_.
- Good night. I love you!